
**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION
APPLICATIONS
Filing An Application**

FNS 305 Filing An Application
Change #5-2016
October 1, 2016

305.01 FILING AN APPLICATION

Households wishing to participate in the Food and Nutrition Services Program must make this desire known and provide the county with enough information regarding household income, resources, and circumstances to make a determination of eligibility.

305.02 REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN APPLICATION

Households must file Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applications by submitting a state-approved application form (DSS-8207) to the FNS office in the county in which they reside. The application may be submitted in person, by an authorized representative, faxed, or by mail.

305.03 REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN APPLICATION AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION)

A Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) unit consisting of only SSI applicants and/or recipients may apply for FNS at the SSA office. Refer to Section 325, SSA Applications, for further instructions.

305.04 TIME FRAME REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN APPLICATION

The application processing time frame for FNS is calculated from the date the application is filed in the FNS office designated by the county to accept the household's application. The date used to determine when an application is filed is the earlier date of the following:

- A. The date the interview occurs if this is the same date the application is signed; **or**
- B. The date the signed application is received in the FNS office if this is prior to the date of the interview application (if received during non-business hours the date received will be the next business day).

Each household has the right to file an application on the same day it visits the FNS office during office hours. Advise the household that it does not have to be interviewed prior to filing the application and may file an incomplete application form as long as the form contains the applicant's name and address and is signed by an adult member of the household or the household's authorized representative. If there is no adult in the household, an emancipated minor may sign the application. The signing of the application form protects the date of application. Register the application **in NC FAST**, within one business day from the time the application form is received or signed in the agency.

305.05 JOINT SSI/FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES APPLICATIONS TIME STANDARDS

When a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and FNS benefits prior to leaving the institution, the filing date is the date the applicant is released from the institution. Refer to Section 325, SSA Applications, for further instructions.

305.06 CONTACTING THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES OFFICE TO APPLY FOR BENEFITS

County departments must encourage households to file an application on the same day the household or its representative contacts the FNS office in person or by telephone and expresses interest in obtaining Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) or expresses concerns which indicate food insecurity.

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- A. If a household contacting the FNS office by telephone does not wish to come to the appropriate office to file the application on the date of the telephone call, he may receive the application form by mail. If the household chooses to have the application form mailed to them, the county must mail the application form to the household on the same date as the phone call.
- B. The county must inform the household that an application form that is delivered by mail is not considered a filed application until the application is signed and returned to the agency.
- C. If a household submits a written request for FNS, the county must mail an application on the same day the request is received in the FNS office.
- D. If a county has designated FNS offices to serve specific geographic areas, households may contact an office other than the one designated to serve the area where they reside.
 - 1. If a household contacts the wrong FNS office in person, the household must be allowed to file an application on the same day. The FNS office must offer to forward the application form to the appropriate office. If the household accepts the offer, the FNS office will forward the application to the appropriate FNS office on the same day as long as the applicant has completed enough information for the application to be filed. Inform the household of the location of the appropriate office by giving the address and telephone number. Inform the household that the application will not be considered filed and the processing time standards will not begin until the appropriate office receives the application. If a household contacts the wrong FNS office by telephone, assess the household for waiver of the office interview and refer the household to the appropriate FNS office. See Section 310, Interviewing, for information on waiver of the office interview.
 - 2. If a household has mailed the application to the wrong office, the FNS office must mail the application to the appropriate office on the same day. Processing time standards will not begin until the appropriate office receives the application.
- E. If a household attempts to apply for Food and Nutrition Services in a county other than their county of residence, inform the applicant that he must apply in the county in which he lives. Give the household the address and telephone number of the FNS office in their county of residence.
- F. If the agency attempts to divert households from applying for Work First cash assistance, do the following:
 - 1. Encourage applicants to continue with their application for FNS.
 - 2. Explain that some of the restrictions and requirements of applying for Work First cash assistance, i.e., time limits, do not apply to FNS.
 - 3. Inform households that receiving FNS does not effect Work First time limits that may be applicable to Work First families.

305.07 AVAILABILITY OF APPLICATIONS

The county department of social services must make application forms readily accessible to potentially eligible households and those groups and organizations involved in outreach efforts. The department must also provide an application form to anyone who requests the form. The county will post signs in the certification office which explain the certification processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact. Information regarding same day filing must also be included in outreach materials and on the application form.

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305.08 WITHDRAWING AN APPLICATION

A household may voluntarily withdraw its application at any time prior to the determination of eligibility. It is not necessary for the withdrawal to be in writing. Document the reason for withdrawal if the household has given a reason and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal. Advise the household of its right to reapply at any time following the withdrawal.

305.09 HOUSEHOLD COOPERATION

- A. To determine Food and Nutrition Services eligibility:
1. The application form must be completed and signed,
 2. The household or its authorized representative must be interviewed, **and**
 3. Certain information on the application must be verified.
- B. If the household refuses to cooperate with the county department in completing the above process, deny the application at the time of refusal.
1. A determination of refusal to cooperate can be made if the household is able to cooperate, but clearly demonstrates that it will not take the required actions to complete the certification process. For example, a household must refuse to be interviewed or refuse to provide verification in order to be denied for refusal to cooperate. Failure to appear for an interview or failure to provide verification is not refusal to cooperate.
 2. If there is any question as to whether the household has failed to cooperate versus refused to cooperate, do not deny the application.
 3. Deny an application if the household refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility, including reviews generated by reported changes, recertifications, or as part of a quality control review. Once denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, the household may reapply but cannot be determined eligible until it cooperates. Refer to Section 210, Household Concept, for instructions regarding QC reviews.